

## REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated December 8, 2008 and the Advisory Action dated March 24, 2009. Claims 1 to 4, 6, and 7 are in the application, with Claim 1 being independent. Claim 1 has been amended herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,530,264 (Kataoka) in view of Colloids and Surfaces B: Biointerfaces, vol. 19, 2000, pp. 257-261 (Inoue). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kataoka and Inoue in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,731,156 (Montmarquet). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kataoka and Inoue in view of Japan 2000-058892 (Tawada), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,127,623 (Nakamura). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kataoka and Inoue in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,534,703 (Dinwoodie). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, (i) the fluoride polymer film has a contact angle with water that is reduced by the discharge treatment, and (ii) the reduced contact angle is in the range of 75° to 95°.

By virtue of the above-discussed features, stain resistance can be developed without reducing the mechanical strength of the film. See page 10, line 24 to page 11, line 5 of the instant specification.

In this regard, Applicants have made extensive study and have found that the surface of a fluoride polymer film is susceptible to staining. The reasons are considered to be (1) it is difficult for rainwater to wet the surface because of the strong water

repellency of the fluoride polymer film, and as such, it is difficult to wash away stains adhered to the surface, and (2) rainwater remains on the surface in the form of droplets, and once the droplets of rainwater are dried, stains such as dust contained in the rainwater are concentrated and speckle the surface of the module. See, page 3, lines 15 to 27, of the instant specification. Resistance to such staining can be achieved by reducing the water repellency of a fluoride polymer film by a discharge treatment, that is, reducing the contact angle with water.

None of Kataoka, Inoue, Montmarquet, Tawada, Nakamura, and Dinwoodie, even in the proposed combinations, assuming, *arguendo*, that such could be combined, is seen to disclose or suggest at least the above-discussed features recited, *inter alia*, by Claim 1.

Kataoka is merely seen to describe that the larger the hydrophobicity of a protective surface, the larger the stain resistance of the surface, and that the lower limit is preferably a contact angle of 70°. See col. 9, lines 22 to 26.

Inoue is seen to relate to a technology of improving the hydrophobicity of a surface of PTFE by argon ion bombardment. The contact angle of water after the ion-bombardment treatment is increased.

Thus, both Kataoka and Inoue are merely seen to describe hydrophobizing a surface, and are not seen to disclose or suggest reducing the contact angle of a fluoride polymer film by a discharge treatment, with the reduced contact angle being in the range of 75° to 95°.

Montmarquet, Tawada, Nakamura, and Dinwoodie are not seen to remedy the foregoing deficiencies of Kataoka and Inoue.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from the independent claim discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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